



ARMY ANNOUNCES NEW HEALTH PROGRAM: RESPECT-MIL

JAN. 22, 2007

The Office of the Army Surgeon General announces the creation of a new health program called RESPECT-MIL. The acronym stands for "Re-engineering Systems of the Primary Care Treatment (of depression and PTSD) in the Military."

RESPECT-MIL is a program directed by The Army Surgeon General (TSG) to provide primary-care based screening, assessment, treatment, and referral of Army Soldiers with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

RESPECT-MIL will roll out at 15 major sites including over 40 primary care clinics across the Army during the 2007 calendar year. Implementation sites planned are Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Drum, N.Y.; Fort Polk, La.; Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Campbell, Ky.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Lewis, Wash.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Vilseck, Germany; Schweinfurt, Germany; and Vicenza, Italy.

"U.S. Army service often requires personal sacrifice, and every one of our Soldiers has made those sacrifices," said Col. Charles Engel, M.D., the director of the Department of Defense, Deployment Health Clinical Center at Walter Reed and the RESPECT-MIL program director. "Every provider that takes care of Soldiers is looking for ways we can show them how grateful we are for their sacrifices, and RESPECT-MIL does that."

"More than any time in history, Army Soldiers and leaders are armed with information about the possible impact of combat on mental health. We also have more mental health resources at home and in theater than ever before," Engel said. With RESPECT-MIL, primary care depression and PTSD screening is routine. When a Soldier is seen, and depression and PTSD screening identifies needs, early assistance is offered.

"It's not always easy for a Soldier with needs to decide when, where, or how to get help. The beauty of RESPECT-MIL is the way it brings the help right to the Soldier," said Lt. Col. Robert Wilson, Psy.D., a U.S. Air Force psychologist, and the deputy director, Deployment Health Clinical Center, Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Wilson has experience with similar Air Force strategies and brings that expertise to RESPECT-MIL. "Personal experience says this is the right thing to do for Soldiers," he said.

"A key goal of the program is to improve continuity of care for mental health issues and to facilitate Soldiers' access to every appropriate tool that Army healthcare has to offer," said Lt. Col. Michael Latzka, MD. Latzka, a family practitioner, is the director of the Fort Bragg based RESPECT-MIL Center of Excellence, the unit responsible for leading the worldwide implementation effort.

“With the help of their provider, Soldiers in RESPECT-MIL may choose counseling or medicines for treatment,” he said. “Nothing is off the table for Soldiers getting RESPECT-MIL assistance.”

The doctor and the RESPECT-MIL facilitator will see to it Soldiers learn about the range of available help resources, which include Military OneSource, Chaplains, and Army Community Services.

“RESPECT-MIL will go into effect for our Fort Bragg Soldiers starting Jan 31, 2007,” said Lt. Col. Victoria Hughes, D.O. Hughes, an Army family practitioner, is leading the effort to implement RESPECT-MIL at Fort Bragg.

“RESPECT-MIL pilot work was completed at Fort Bragg’s Robinson Health Clinic and Fort Bragg will serve as the model for the 14 other sites,” she said. “The program is challenging, but it’s feasible, based on high quality scientific evidence, and does the right thing for Soldiers.”

The RESPECT-MIL model the Army is using builds on and was developed with the assistance of MacArthur Foundation-sponsored investigators from Duke, Dartmouth, Indiana Universities and other institutions who are considered international experts in the primary care and behavioral-health fields.

-END-

For more information, news media may contact Cynthia Vaughan, 703-681-0519, Cynthia.Vaughan@us.army.mil.